

MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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Vol. IV

MARCH, 1943

No. 1

John Derstine Souder 1865—1942

MENNONITE HISTORIAN

JOHN C. WENGER

One of the most active local historians of the Mennonite Church was the late John D. Souder of Telford, Pennsylvania. Born in Rockhill township, Bucks county, on March 4, 1865, he came of an old Franconia family. The parents of John D. Souder were John Nice and Mary Gehman Derstine Souder, members of the Franconia congregation of the Franconia Conference. Following the death of Mary Derstine Souder, John N. married her sister, Esther Derstine. John D. always spoke appreciatively of his step-mother. Both the Souder and Derstine families were large. When John was a lad in the Indian Field country school he listed his aunts and uncles and found that he had a total of thirty, and one hundred thirty first cousins. At the age of seventy-five he reported that only thirteen first cousins were still alive and three of them were nearing ninety years of age.

At the age of six John D. Souder moved with his family to the farm where he died, a property just across the road from the Indian Creek Reformed Church. Most of his life he was a farmer and dealer in fancy poultry, although he did carry mail for fourteen years, as well as operate a store for some years in the village of Telford. He also served as the Telford postmaster for several years during McKinley's administration. On February 5, 1887, he was married to Sallie G. Alderfer, who lived happily with him for fifty years. Three sons (Preston, Mahlon, and Raymond) and two daughters (Florence, Mrs. Harvey F. Keller, and Edna, Mrs. Herbert Kulp) survived him, while several infants preceded him in death (Charles, Wilmer, Howard, and Clayton).

Already as a youth of twenty John D. Souder took an active interest in local history, writing a series of articles on the history of his township. These articles were published in book form in 1886 at Harleysville, Pennsylvania, entitled *History of Franconia Township*. One of the

schoolteachers of John was Samuel R. Swartley of Lansdale, Pennsylvania, a man some years his senior but still living. It is possible that the influence of Swartley played a part in the intellectual awakening of John D. Souder. In any case it is said that as a boy he was inclined to lie on his stomach on the floor and read, omnivorously we may well believe. For some years after his marriage, which took place in his twenty-second year, he was undoubtedly concerned mainly with earning a livelihood for his growing family. But his keen mind was ever alert to the ordinary things about him. In his later years he turned more and more to local history. He collected books, clipped newspaper articles of historical interest, attended historical meetings of all kinds, joined the "Pennsylvania German Society," wrote historical scrap books, and longed to see someone write the history of the Men-



John D. Souder at Work on Illuminated Manuscripts

nonites of his conference district. He collected numerous notes on the project himself, but never felt qualified as a trained historian and literary man to undertake the actual writing. When the first officers of his regional church historical society were appointed in 1930 he was named chairman. When he died almost twelve years later he was still president of the "Franconia Mennonite Historical Society."

For many years he used to make drawings of birds in various colors of ink and present the picture cards to the children of his friends and of his Sunday school. Shortly before the death of his wife (December, 1937) he made a drawing in colors (Turn to page 3, col. 2)

John S. Coffman 1848—1899

MENNONITE EVANGELIST

FLOYD A. SHANK

John S. Coffman was born in Rockingham county, Virginia, October 16, 1848. His parents, Samuel and Frances Weaver Coffman, were Mennonites of German descent. His father was an active and capable Mennonite minister and bishop in the Middle District of the Mennonite Conference of Virginia. Before John S. Coffman was born, his mother definitely dedicated the unborn child to the Lord. At the time of his birth she had a very definite spiritual witness that God had accepted the consecration.

John grew up as a mild-tempered "mother's boy." Because he was the eldest child, his needed services at home prevented him in his early youth from going to school as much as he desired. When a Mennonite, David A. Heatwole, opened a private school, conducting day and evening classes in the neighborhood, John was given more school opportunity and became an exceptional student. In the summer of 1864, one evening while in the orchard, conviction seized him and he was convinced he needed salvation. Under this burden he knelt by a tree and prayed for salvation and God answered him. On July 4 of the same year, then sixteen years of age, he was baptized in Muddy Creek and became a member of the Mennon-

ite Church.

As a youth he tried to use every opportunity for learning. He borrowed books from Dr. Bucher of Bridgewater Normal. Dr. Bucher was so much impressed with this young man's eagerness to learn that he refused to accept any pay for the use of his books. Young Coffman took the teacher's examinations, and upon passing began teaching public school. He was also greatly interested in music and taught private singing schools. On November 11, 1869, he married Elizabeth Heatwole. He added to his teaching duties the occupation of farming. Yet all the while he continued to pursue his studies. He was reputed as being "one of the liveliest teachers in the county." As

a young man he was dignified, friendly, serious-minded, conscientious, industrious.

July 18, 1875, John S. Coffman was ordained in the Mennonite Church to the ministry. His very first sermon showed a marked departure from the traditional sing-song, extemporaneous preaching. He had a definite conviction for the ministry and applied himself diligently to the study of the Bible. He outlined his sermons and preached with energy and persuasiveness. People liked to hear him. Though he respected the feelings of the older brethren, he was still courageous for the Lord.

J. S. Coffman accepted a call to become assistant editor of the *Herald of Truth*, and in 1879 moved to Elkhart, Indiana, where the paper was published. His services as a minister were also greatly appreciated by the Mennonite congregation at Elkhart. Especially during his early labors at Elkhart he had a growing conviction that special evangelistic efforts should be made for the gathering in of Mennonite young people, many of whom were being lost to Christ and the church. He had a conviction that he should take up evangelistic work himself. However, since the leaders in many parts of the church looked with disfavor upon holding a series of evangelistic meetings, he fasted and prayed much concerning this burden.

In June, 1881, the congregation at Bowne, Michigan, in need of spiritual help, called Coffman to come and spend some time with them. After he had preached the first few sermons, seeing that the interest was good, he continued preaching night after night for a week. Nine souls confessed Christ and the congregation experienced a great reviving. This was his first series of meetings, and one of the earliest in the Mennonite Church. J. N. Durr, pastor of the Mennonite congregation at Masontown, Pennsylvania, hearing of the revival in Michigan, invited Coffman to conduct a series of evangelistic meetings at his church. This he did in December, 1881, with the visible result of twelve souls being received into the church. The news of the activities of the pioneer Mennonite evangelist soon spread far and wide. Some Mennonites criticized, others wanted to hear him. Wide-awake ministers, realizing the need of a revival, invited this young evangelist to conduct series of meetings in their congregations. John S. Coffman soon found himself busily engaged in the work for which he had such a great burden. From east to west, from north to south among the Mennonite and Amish congregations he was called. Scores and hundreds of souls were won to Christ and dozens of congregations were set aglow with spirituality. Probably his greatest revival was the one among the congregations in Ontario, Canada, in 1891, where over one hundred souls were won for Christ. While laboring there he is reported to have spent at times the greater part of nights in prayer.

John S. Coffman was well qualified for the work of an evangelist. His dignified, alert, warm, friendly personality won for

him respect and friendship everywhere. He had a fair education, a rich background of human associations, and a sympathetic interest in the welfare of others. He had a definite conversion experience, knew that he was saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, and had witnessed the power of God in his own life and in the lives of others. He knew the Word of God and was able to preach it with conviction and power. A great passion for souls burned in his heart which caused him to spend long hours with God in prayer.

The work of John S. Coffman as an evangelist cannot be measured simply by the great number of souls whom he led to Christ. He was able to reach and win some of the more talented young men who later became leaders in the Mennonite Church and have done much toward remodeling it after Coffman's spiritual mind. Among his converts who later became ordained leaders in the church should be mentioned: Daniel Kauffman, George R. Brunk, Tillman Erb, J. M. R. Weaver, Jos. C. Driver, N. O. Blosser, M. S. Steiner, J. B. Smith, L. J. Lehman, and E. S. Hallman. S. F. Coffman, D. H. Bender, J. A. Ressler, and Aaron Loucks are among the Christian young men whose lives were challenged by Coffman and whose services were directed into the Mennonite Church to help make it a spiritual, evangelistic body.

The life of John S. Coffman made many contributions besides evangelism. In addition to being the first editor of Mennonite Sunday-school lesson helps, his life and teaching gave the then weak Sunday-school movement in the Mennonite Church great impetus. The origin of mission work and young people's meetings in the Mennonite Church can be traced in a large way to his advocacy. John S. Coffman is the man who was personally responsible for making Elkhart Institute a Mennonite Institution founded upon Biblical principles, and therefore he is the founder of higher education in the (Old) Mennonite Church of America. Besides all his work for the church he also found time to spend with his seven children and fine Christian wife, reading and praying with them and leading them in the way of the Lord.

John S. Coffman was a man who toiled on in the way he believed God was directing, regardless of hindrances and opposition. Though he was diplomatic and had hundreds of friends inside and outside the Mennonite Church, he was constantly laboring under criticism and opposition from ultra-conservative leaders. He was a pioneer in every sense of the word. His entire life was devoted to breaking open spiritual trails over which others could carry on the work in larger dimensions. John S. Coffman died at his home at Elkhart, Indiana, July 22, 1899. He burned out his life at the early age of fifty years.

For true evangelical faith is of such nature that it can not be workless or idle; it ever manifests its powers.—Menno Simons.

Travel Notes of Samuel Godshalk

EDITED BY JOHN C. WENGER
(Continued from Dec. 1942, issue)

4. TO ONTARIO

Took the train for Kalamazoo; on to Detroit. Crossed into Canada at Port Huron at 6:00 [May 18]. Reached Hamburg at 4:00 p.m. Spent the night at Abram Cressman's.

May 19. Took dinner at George Smith's. Visited with Preacher [Moses S.] Bowman and spent the night with him.

May 20 [Thursday]. Attended the meeting at "Latshaw's" [Latschars] near Bowman's home. "Waterloo has 19 meeting houses and 4 branch houses which they tend. They go at times 80 miles to visit those places." Took dinner at David Eshleman's, and supper with Widow Cressman. Spent the night at Minister Jacob Hallman's.

May 21. We went to the meeting at Blenheim's. Dinner at Joseph Hallman's. [The diary indicates that in 1869 "old man Hallman" was quite helpless due to the infirmities of old age, apparently.] Some Blenheim members have joined the Dunkards.

May 22. Went to Detweiler's meeting. Here we met a niece of Jacob Hestand [of the Franconia Conference?]. The preachers of this meeting are Henry Shantz and E[noch] Detweiler, and John Detweiler is deacon. We went to Shantz's for dinner, and to Minister John Stoeckle's for supper. Spent the night at Jacob Shoemaker's.

May 23 [Sunday]. Went to the meeting at David Eby's, then to his house for dinner. To Brother Snyder's for the night.

May 24. Went to Martin's meeting. Took dinner with Brother John Martin, father of Bishop [Abraham] Martin. "It looks here as much like Lancaster county as any place I saw; the climate is colder, is all the difference."

Took supper with David Horst then went to Bishop Abraham Martin's.

May 25. Bishop Martin and son took us to meeting. On the way we went by St. Jacobs, crossed the Conestoga twice and followed it a short distance. From the meeting we went to Brother John B. Brubaker, "where he commenced in the woods," when he came here from Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, as did "many of the brethren." His son, Michael M., lives with him.

Waterloo County is settled with Scotch and Germans. "The Mennonites seem warm and inclined to humility and the old fundamentals of the church. There was a great flood in Canada on the 26th of April such as the old settlers never [saw] here."

Spent the night with Samuel Weber who has 600 acres of land. On the way to his home we stopped with a Brother Rock for over an hour and also called on a sick person named Martin.

May 26. Attended the Snyder meeting. Took dinner with Henry Overholt who settled here 36 years ago. After calling on Brother Jacob Schantz we

took supper with Moses Erb, a minister. Spent the night with Daniel Wismer.

May 27. Wismer took us to the Snyder meeting. We went to Brother Joseph Heagy's for dinner and to George Clemens' for supper. Spent the night at Christ Snyder's. Under the blessings of God the Canadian Mennonites have prospered financially: "Now some look up [with pride] where [as] they should humble themselves, and be very thankful and walk in the footsteps of Christ."

May 27. Went to conference and passed through Berlin [Kitchener now]; left the team at William Meyer's. Meyer gave me a Testament from Overholt's bookstore in Berlin. "It seems to me those brethren are too wealthy; they have a great reason to humble themselves."

The conference discussed receiving those brethren that went with the so-called Overholt people. "After a long debate rather decided to take them in [as] ministers without casting [a] lot, if the church is willing to accept of them in this way. I fear they will not prosper in this way. . . . I like our way better."

The order of the conference meeting was as follows: 1. Singing; 2. Prayer; 3. "Business"; 4. Prayer; and 5. Singing.

The settlers have shot and ate many deer. The wolves used to be hard on the deer and on sheep. The settlers used to catch wolves in traps, and kill them with forks, guns and dogs "without mercy. . . ."

May 29. [Saturday]. Cloudy. Passed through Berlin again. Visited Isaac Hunsicker who is ill. Called on Henry Benner [?] and took dinner with Abraham Meyer. Attended the Preparatory Service at Eby's. Took supper at Michael Hunsicker's; they live in Berlin. Then went to Joseph Snyder's.

May 30. [Sunday]. To meeting in the morning. "They tell me some don't keep the preparatory day; think it something new." The morning service was a communion service. Joseph Heagy is the bishop. Attended meeting in the afternoon at "Heagy's" [Hagey's] meeting [house]. Visited Jacob Heagy. Went with Brother Shenk to the Preston depot.

May 31. Went to "Gall" [Gault]. Changed "cars" [trains] at Harrisburg. "Passed the head of Lake Ontario." Reached Jordan at 11 o'clock. "I now am anxious to see Til Moyer; he is sick." Took dinner at Jacob High's. "Then he took us to Tilman Meyer, and found him quite smart."

June 1. "Slept sweet at Br[other] T. Moyer. Received our first letter here; it was a great consolation. It was Sarah's. Four more [were] sent to Waterloo which I did not get there. I would have given 50 cts. apiece for them. . . ." Took dinner with Deacon Abrm. Kratz. "I think this is the heart of Canada." Took supper with Isaac, son of Deacon Kratz. Spent the night at Henry Meyer's.

(To be concluded)

JOHN DERSTINE SOUDER

(Concluded from page 1, col. 2)

to commemorate their fiftieth wedding anniversary. The death of his life companion was a blow from which he suffered keenly. As time went on he seemed to mourn intensely. Partly in an effort to entertain himself he took up his pen and ink and started to copy the old Pennsylvania German art designs. These illuminated manuscripts he worked on day after day, copying designs from school awards of bygone days, hymnbook inscriptions, artistic Bible verses, and even earthen table plates. Some of these *Fraktur-Schriften* he copied accurately, while others he modified to suit his own taste. By the time he was seventy-five years of age he had made four hundred drawings or art designs, and by the time of his death (at seventy-seven) the number had grown to 1,000. These were placed on exhibition at the New York Metropolitan Museum. Specimens of his work are also found in the Mennonite Historical Library of Goshen College.

John D. Souder was a devout member of the Rockhill Mennonite Church, where for many years his brother, Mahlon D. Souder (1859-1924), served as minister. John served as Sunday-school superintendent many years ago. He was president of the cemetery committee, organized in 1929. He was much concerned for the prosperity of the church, favoring that type of discipline which would not drive the finest young people from the church.

He was keen-minded and alert, even in his seventies, always enjoying a little humor. The following extract from a letter written to me on April 19, 1938, indicates something of his spirit: ". . . I am busy, but I have to wrestle with a 45-year-old head and a 73-year-old body to back my ambition. I thank God for the spiritual ambition, and pray that we all may grow in Grace and the Knowledge which is in Christ Jesus. . . ."

The great passion of his life was to see the history of the Mennonites written in a more honest and sympathetic way. This desire was so strong in him that he himself was not always entirely objective. But he knew the Mennonites intimately, was himself a devout member of the group, and he knew that the bulk of the literature about Mennonites was simply not a true picture of them. The preparation for publication of the *History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference* in the years 1935-36 was for him a most happy experience. When the book appeared (1937) he felt that his life's work was done. He had agitated for such a work for a long time, had participated intimately in its production, and lived to see the finished book. Only later did he take up the production of illuminated manuscripts as a major undertaking.

The following tribute appeared in the *Souderton* [Penna.] *Independent* on the occasion of his death: "The Independent loses a friend of long standing in the passing of Mr. Souder. His visits to our office were quite frequent in his more

NEWS & NOTES

The original diary kept by Preacher Samuel Godshalk is now in the possession of the senior minister of the Franconia Conference, Jacob Rush of the Deep Run Mennonite congregation. The address of Bro. Rush is Plumsteadville, Pennsylvania.

One of the richest sources for Mennonite history research is found in the files of the *Herald of Truth*, 1864-1908. One finds quite a variety of items in this periodical. For example, in the *Herald* of June 1, 1882, it is reported that recently the seats were changed, backs were added to them, and the preacher's stand was placed on the southeast side of the Doylestown meetinghouse of the Franconia Conference. The June 15 *Herald* of the same year reports that Brother Daniel Tschantz (Johns) of the Clinton Church was ordained to the ministry at the communion service on June 4. This same issue also contains an article against church building dedication services by no less a leader than John S. Coffman.

The March issue of the BULLETIN is appearing sufficiently late to report the death of Allen M. Fretz, well known minister of Perkase, Pennsylvania. He was affiliated with the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America. He passed away on April 26, 1943, at the advanced age of 89 years. He was ordained to the ministry on October 13, 1883. He served as pastor of the Deep Run Congregation for almost sixty years. Rev. Fretz was an active man in his community, having even been nominated by the Republican party for the state legislature many years ago.

(Turn to page 4, col. 2)

active days and he usually brought with him some new historical findings or pictures. He contributed many articles which were of great reader interest on old barns, trees, stone and covered bridges, cemeteries, landmarks, etc.

"He performed an invaluable service to the community in keeping alive the characteristics of the ancestors whose thoughts and deeds helped shape the destiny of this section and truly it can be said that he was the link in the chain that steadfastly held the past to the present that those who live in the future may have a knowledge of what happened in earlier years."

About the middle of August, 1942, he became bedfast. Could he have written his obituary he would have put down something like this: "John D. Souder who lived long and enjoyed God's goodness all his days, fell asleep in the Lord on September 14, 1942, and after a funeral sermon by Bishop John Lapp was laid to rest in God's burial acre by the old Rockhill Mennonite Meetinghouse. His works do follow him."

A Review of Dunham's Trail of the Conestoga

GLADYS GRABER

The Trail of the Conestoga, written by Mabel Dunham, is based upon the life of Mennonites who emigrated to Ontario from the Hammer Creek community in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, over one hundred years ago. The early settlers had come to Penn's forest upon the promise that they would never need to take part in war. At the time of the American Revolution the Mennonites began to fear that the new republic would disregard this contract; so a number of families emigrated to Ontario, transforming a wilderness there into a prosperous community in what is now Waterloo county. The chief characters of the story are Sam and Beccy Bricker, with others of their "Freundschaft." Details of early Mennonite home life, church services, architecture, and community life are all vividly portrayed. The emigrants traveled west and north, crossing the Susquehanna River, pushing on across the Allegheny mountains, and finally braving the Niagara River to the "Promised Land" of Canada.

Their task was only begun, and hardships lay before them—the forest had to be cleared to make homes, there were wild animals to combat, and in addition to diphtheria and cholera there was homesickness of a very real and painful kind. Illegal land transfers made by an unscrupulous agent caused the Mennonites much trouble until Sam Bricker somehow raised the money to pay off the mortgage and obtain a clear title to the sixty thousand acres. The community began to prosper and, after some unpleasant experiences with the government during the War of 1812, the Mennonites continued to live in peace.

As I read through *The Trail of the Conestoga* there were a few things with which I disagreed. One was the author's idea of the history and extraction of the Mennonites—that they had come in part from the Waldensians. I believe that this is not true according to the most accurate information about the Mennonites. It is not a serious error, but it would have been misleading if this were the only book I would ever read about the Mennonites. Another point that I noticed was the author's tendency to portray all the Mennonites as clumsy, helpless, and unsuspecting people who scarcely knew how to manage their affairs and were careless in the handling of their finances. No doubt this was true of some of the people, but as I read this book I was left with the impression that all of these people were that way. It seemed to me just a trifle overdrawn. The attitude toward women is scarcely correct either, e. g., their subordination to the men.

There were many things about this story which I enjoyed. Miss Dunham handled the conversation skillfully, using enough of the dialect to make the chapters interesting, yet not too much to over-

burden the reader who is not familiar with Pennsylvania Dutch accent and expressions. The author also gives us the picture of strong characters—God-fearing, hard-working, earnest pioneers who are at the same time the followers of high ideals, human, and tender without being sentimental.

It was refreshing to read this story of a group of our own church who were willing to re-build their lives and fortunes in the wilderness to maintain their testimony and life of peace.

QUESTION BOX

Who was the first Mennonite young woman to teach in the *public* schools of the United States? Anna M. Beutler taught in McPherson County, Kansas, in the fall of 1880. Was she the first?—M. G.

NEWS AND NOTES

(Concluded from page 3, col. 3)

The BULLETIN editors are happy to publish in this issue several papers written by students in the Mennonite History class at Goshen College. The BULLETIN welcomes similar contributions from the students of other Mennonite colleges.

In the near future the BULLETIN will contain an article on the history of the Forks congregation, near Middlebury, Indiana, of the Indiana-Michigan Conference. The editors welcome similar studies of other congregations.

In the BULLETIN of April, 1940, and repeated in the issue of April, 1941, a request was made for information of any person who has done research in the history of the Sensenig family. Bishop Noah H. Mack, New Holland, Pa., has supplied this information. He reports that research in the history of that family has been made by Barton Sensenig, 201 W. Mt. Pleasant Ave., Philadelphia, Pa.

Recent new members enrolled in the Mennonite Historical Association are the following: Harry M. Nolt, R. D. 1, Barcville, Pa.; Reynold Weinbrenner, North Newton, Kansas; I. Erwin Yothers, R. D. 2, Perkasio, Pa.; Esther Weber, 324 S. Atherton St., State College, Pa.; Eli J. Bontrager, R. R. 2, Box 70, Shipshewana, Indiana; Jesse D. Hartzler, Wellman, Iowa; Chester K. Lehman, Eastern Mennonite School, Harrisonburg, Va. We welcome these new members into our circle of readers and supporters.

The total membership of our Mennonite Historical Association has not yet reached the one hundred mark. Out of a membership of over fifty thousand persons in the Mennonite Church there should be several hundred at least who are interested in the history of their church and who are willing to contribute every year

a small sum toward the promotion of such interest among others. Help us to enlarge the circle of the Association.

Four persons, members of the Association, are entitled to receive honorable mention as sustaining members of the Mennonite Historical Association for the year 1942. They are as follows: Ira D. Landis, Lititz, Pa.; Mahlon A. Souder, Blooming Glen, Pa.; Orie O. Miller, Akron, Pa.; Edward Yoder, Scottdale, Pa. Each of these paid five dollars to the Association for last year toward the promotion of the work of the Association and of the Historical Committee of General Conference. We invite these and others to contribute this sum in 1943.

The dues for the year 1943 are due to be paid now. Before you forget about it, send your remittance to the treasurer, Edward Yoder, Scottdale, Pa.

MENNONITE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Mennonite Historical Association is a church-wide organization of men and women who are interested in the history of the Mennonite Church and desire to help in the work of making this history more widely known. The Association was first established in 1939 by action of Mennonite General Conference upon the recommendation of its Historical Committee.

THE MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN is published four times a year for this Association by the Historical Committee mentioned above. The first issue of the Bulletin came out in April, 1940. For the first two years it was published twice a year. Beginning with 1942 it has appeared four times a year. It contains short articles and reviews, a variety of news notes, historical facts and information of interest to the members of the Association.

Anyone desiring to learn more about the Mennonite Church and its past history is invited to become a member of the Association and receive the BULLETIN. The membership fee is one dollar a year. The payment of five dollars a year to the Association entitles a person to be enrolled as a sustaining member for that year.

If you are already a member of the Mennonite Historical Association, will you tell others about the Association, and about the HISTORICAL BULLETIN, inviting them to enroll as members and so help along in its work? If you have not already joined the Association, use the blank form provided below and send in your enrollment application. Do this at once, and thereby become a supporter of the Mennonite Historical Association and a regular reader of this BULLETIN.

APPLICATION BLANK

Historical Committee,
Edward Yoder, Treasurer,
Scottdale, Pa.

Brethren: I wish to be enrolled as a member of the Mennonite Historical Association. Find enclosed one dollar to pay my dues for one year. You may send the Mennonite Historical Association to the address indicated below.

Name _____
Street or R. R. No. _____
Post office _____
State _____

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Vol. IV

JUNE, 1943

No. 2

Mennonite Background of the Present School System

IRA D. LANDIS

As our pioneer fathers were emerging from this 'forest primeval,' they looked favorably on education for inculcating the four R's (Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic, and Religion). Since most of our children united with the church their dwellings soon became too small for the services. The Church-School House was the happy solution. Three such were built in Manheim Township north of Lancaster Town in the second decade of the nineteenth century. One was at John Smith's (opposite John Shirk's) near Oregon. Another (1813) was at the Michael Lehn Cemetery in the north (This building was used for school purposes until unroofed by a storm in 1861). The third is now owned by Charles B. Landis at Roseville and is used as a dwelling.

The latter, built in 1814 by community subscription, has the following by-laws:

THE LANDIS SCHOOL

HOUSE (1814)¹

Ordinances by which the School and Meetings to be held in the Landis School House shall be regulated.

1. There shall always be three Trustees to superintend the repairing of the said School House and the School that shall be kept therein.

2. No person shall have a right to vote in the choice of Trustees or teacher, but such as have contributed in money or labor toward the building of the said School House.

3. Any person who hath contributed either money or labor toward the building of the said School House shall have a right to send scholars to the School that shall be kept therein and a vote in the choice of the Trustees and School Masters.

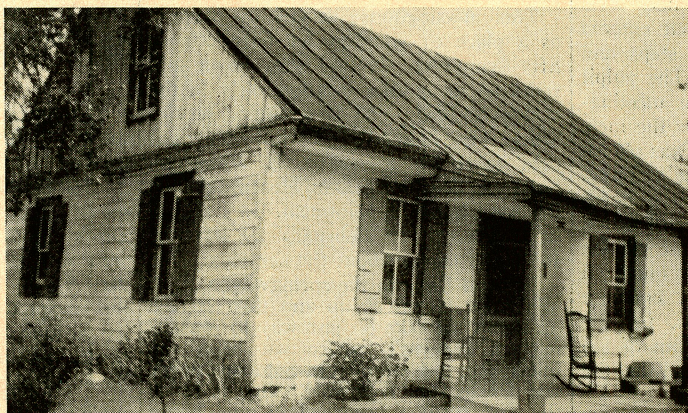
4. In the Case of death, removal, or misconduct of a Trustee, another shall be elected in his stead, of which election notices shall be given in an Advertisement placed on the outside of the Door of the said School House at least four weeks prior to the Day of Election.

5. Any Dispute concerning the School,

the Teacher, or any Trustee shall be decided by a Majority of Votes.

6. The Mennonists shall have a Right to hold their Meetings and Worship in the said School House once in four weeks (to wit) on the eighth day of January Anno Domini One thousand eight hundred and fifteen and henceforth every fourth Sunday forever. And if at any Time they shall think proper to alter the Time of their Meetings and the Trustees agree to it, they may henceforth hold their Meetings either one week earlier or one week later.

7. The United Brethren in Christ² shall have a Right to hold their Meetings and Worship in said School House once in four Weeks, to wit on the first day of January, Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and fifteen and thenceforth every fourth Sunday forever. But if at any time they shall think proper to alter the Time of their Meeting and if the Trustees consent to it, they may henceforth hold their Meetings one Week earlier or one



Landis Schoolhouse, Built in 1814, Now Used as a Dwelling

Week later.

8. The Right which any Person hath in or to the said School House shall forever remain on his present Place of Residence, so that after the Death or Removal of any Person who hath any Right in or to the said School House, that Right as well as the Right of voting for Teachers and Trustees shall always descend and come to the Possessor and Occupant of such Place of Residence.

Trustees: Christian Metz, Christian Hershey, John Basler [all Menists]. 59.67 perches, borders on Henry Landis, Sr. and Jr. and Abr Stipgen.

The schoolhouse had several flat tables with a large wood stove in the center. Six sheets of foolscap sewed together served for a copybook instead of a blackboard. A slate pencil and a goose quill with indigo solution for ink served as equipment for the lessons in penmanship. Byerly's Speller, Rose and Pike's Arith-
(Turn to page 4, col. 2)

Meetinghouses of the Weaver's Church

H. A. BRUNK

Weaver's Church had probably the fourth meetinghouse to be built by Virginia Mennonites. The first one, namely Trissels, was erected in 1822. Weaver's is located in Rockingham County, Virginia, about three miles west of Harrisonburg.

The date for the first building of the Weaver's church is not clearly established by the records. The late Bishop L. J. Heatwole wrote, in his centennial article on the establishment of the Weaver's Church, that it was built in 1826. On the other hand the Virginia Conference minutes, which were of a later date, say that the meetinghouse was built in 1827. This

is also the date that appears on the cornerstone of the new structure built in 1941.

The records do show that a transfer of land was made some time in August, 1828, and that a church building stood on the land at that time. The deed records that Jacob Shank and his wife, Fannie, transferred about one-half acre of land to the first Weaver's Church trustees for the sum of one dollar, paid by said trustees. Of course it is understood that the land was donated for the purpose

and the actual transfer of money was made in order to make the transaction legal. Peter Burkholder, Frederick Rhodes, and Abraham Nieswander are named as the first trustees.

It was to be expected that Fannie Shank, wife of Jacob Shank, would be required to sign the papers for the transfer of the land. This she did at the time the deed was given to the above mentioned trustees. Then for some reason Fannie Shank alone, apart from her husband, was required to appear before the authorities to sign additional papers in regard to the transfer of said land. Fannie Shank did not sign her name but instead made her own sign. This sign appears at three places on the above mentioned documents and it was made the same way each time.

The grantors of the land for the above mentioned meetinghouse made it a

matter of law that the land should always be used by Mennonite people. They specified in the deed that if one or more of the trustees should give up their affiliation with the Mennonite Church they forfeited the title to said land and that it should go to the successors of the first Mennonite trustees forever.

We are not able to determine the exact size of the old meetinghouse. The late Bishop Heatwole wrote in 1926 that the building was about 18 feet wide and 28 feet long. At another writing he states that it was 30 feet wide and 40 feet long. People who still remember the old meetinghouse think the second estimate is the more nearly correct. It was built of pine, oak, and chestnut logs and weatherboarded on the outside. The doors at the side and end were ordinary batten doors, not panel doors such as are used at the present time.

The building occupied about the same place as the one now standing on the grounds. It was perhaps up the hill a bit farther. It stood like the present church with the long side towards the road. There was a difference in the entrances, however. The entrance for the men was in the center on the south side. This, it will be observed, was on the lower side of the hill. Consequently high steps were needed to reach the floor level of the meetinghouse. The men entered the building by way of these steps and then occupied the south end. The pulpit was on the north side of the meetinghouse, opposite the entrance for the men.

The entrance for the women was placed near the northeast corner of the building. The anteroom was placed at the north side at the east end. It will be observed from the lay of the land that the women entered the meetinghouse pretty much on the level. Therefore the east entrance was used on funeral occasions, for the casket could be gotten in and out of the building here more easily than at the south entrance.

To the south of the meetinghouse at the northwest corner stood the saddlehouse, where saddles were placed either underneath or in the building when the weather was bad. Then to the east, straight out from the women's entrance, stood the old stile where the women dismounted and mounted their horses. At the ends of the same, railings were placed on which the women placed their black riding skirts when the weather was fair.

Weaver's Church was first called Burkholder's Church. This was due to the part that Peter Burkholder had in the building of the meetinghouse. He was a man of considerable wealth for his day. It is said that he owned more than five hundred acres of land in this vicinity. With the aid of his neighbors he assumed the responsibility for the erection of the house of worship. Burkholder was one of the first trustees, a prominent minister, and later he was ordained bishop for all the Mennonite congregations in Virginia. The present bishop districts were established during his time, in 1840. Under

the new arrangement he became bishop of the first Middle District. The name was changed to Weaver's Church when Samuel Weaver of Smith's Creek bought and located on the land south and west of the meetinghouse, about 1840. This Samuel Weaver became permanent sexton of the meetinghouse, and the place after a time took his name.

One of the oldest persons living at this writing, Mrs. Mary Burkholder, the wife of the late deacon, S. M. Burkholder, remembers the wife of this Samuel Weaver. She was known by the people of the 1870's as Grandmother Weaver, or as Betsey Weaver. It was her custom to visit the neighbors with a basket on her arm, in which she carried her knitting. Her connection with the old meetinghouse is that she had a special seat in which she invariably sat. This was one of the benches that ran north and south, and was located just inside the anteroom door. The second place on the same bench was filled by Aunt Lizzie Hartman, the mother of the late P. S. Hartman. Perhaps Bro. Hartman in having a special seat in the meetinghouse was following the example of his mother. The third occupant in order on the same bench was Aunt Mottie Rhodes. The deacons and the song leader occupied the bench opposite them on the men's side.

This meetinghouse served its purpose as a place of worship for fifty-four or fifty-five years. It was torn down and removed to another location early in the spring of 1881. The last regular service (these were held only once a month) was held there on February 20. Preachers Solomon Beery and Dan Heatwole filled the last regular appointment. L. J. Heatwole's diary for February 20 has the following to say about the services:

Hitched Dora to the springwagon . . . We fixed ourselves up and then started off down the pike on our way to preaching at Weaver's where we heard an interesting discourse from Solomon Beery and Uncle Dan Heatwole. This is to be the last sermon preached in this house as this same building will be torn down in a few days to give room for a larger and more commodious structure to be built during the summer.

One important reason for the construction of a new meetinghouse in 1881 was the fact that the old one was no longer large enough to accommodate the people that met there for public worship.

The new house of worship, that is, the one erected in 1881, the second Weaver's Church, was completed and ready for use by Sunday, June 26, when dedication services were held in the new building. Bishop Samuel Coffman, father of John S. Coffman, preached the sermon for the occasion. L. J. Heatwole gives us a complete outline of the first service in the new meetinghouse, as follows:

Sunday, June 26, 1881; Preaching at Weaver's—"This was the first time services were held in this building. The congregation consisted in number of over 600. The first hymn sung was "While I my Ebenezer raise" etc., the first exhortation and prayer was offered by Pre.

(Turn to page 3, col. 2)

NEWS & NOTES

The Pennsylvania German Society in 1942 published its 49th volume of *Proceedings and Addresses*. The major part of this particular volume is a monograph entitled "The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County," by Calvin George Bachman. There are 294 pages of well-written material with an index. One section deals with "Amish Origins," being five chapters on the past history of the Amish. The larger section has twenty-eight chapters covering all phases of Amish church, home, and community life. Also included are eighteen illustrations, all of them excellent photographs. The author of this monograph on the Amish is a Reformed minister of New Holland, Pa. He is specially well informed through historical study and from personal acquaintance and observation of his subject. He writes with sympathetic interest and understanding of the Amish people and has hardly left any detail of their life and culture untouched. He also shows full acquaintance with the historical material that has been published to date on Amish history. This work will doubtless prove to be a valuable contribution to an understanding and appreciation of the Old Order Amish and their culture.

The press has announced that a Germantown lady, Mrs. Margaret K. Pritchett, has willed \$10,000 to the Germantown Mennonite Church to erect a monument on its grounds in honor of her ancestor, Dirck Keyser. She is giving the additional sum of \$30,000 to the church for its own use. Those familiar with the history of the Germantown congregation will recall its various conference affiliations: prior to its organizational collapse about 1840-50, it was affiliated with the Franconia Mennonite Conference; the few Germantown Mennonites of 1847 probably sympathized with John H. Oberholtzer, founder of what is now known as the Eastern District Conference of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America. In 1851 the Germantown Mennonites (individuals, no church) "stood by" the Hunsicker group which withdrew from the Oberholtzer conference. In 1863 the congregation was re-organized and called F. R. S. Hunsicker as pastor, but four years later he became a Presbyterian. Finally in 1876 the congregation affiliated with Oberholtzer's Eastern District Conference, where it has since remained.

The *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory* (Scottdale, Pa.) for 1943 contains photographs and biographies of six Mennonite bishops, as follows: Abner G. Yoder, Parnell, Iowa; Elias L. Frey, Archbold, Ohio; Daniel J. Johns, Goshen, Indiana; Elias B. Stoltzfus, Aurora, Ohio; Lewis Shank, Broadway, Virginia; Samuel Grant Shetler, Holsopple, Pa.

Travel Notes of Samuel Godshalk

EDITED BY J. C. WENGER

(Concluded from March, 1943, issue)

June 2. Meyer took us to the funeral of Betty Hunsperger at Rev. Hunsberger's; John Bear and I officiated. She was 83 years, 9 months and 4 days of age. "A nice assembly was present." Took dinner at Samuel T. Moyer's. "Elder John Brubaker in Berlin owns over 1000 acres of land." Took supper with Michael Martin, son-in-law of A. Moyer. "The Central rail road now runs through this Moyer Valley."

June 3. Am now at Samuel Kulp's. Took dinner at John Krupp's. Visited Moses Krupp, then Lawrence Hipple. Supper at Mich[ael] Rittenhouse. Night at Isaac Kulp's.

June 4. Visited Jacob H. Moyer, right on Lake Ontario. Took dinner with Isaac Wismer's. Jacob H. Moyer stores huge quantities of grain and ships it on lake steamers; takes in as much as 50,000 bushels of grain in some seasons. Supper at Philip Wismer's. Rittenhouse took me to Brother Abraham Hunsperger for the night.

June 5. Attended the funeral of Magdalena, wife of Frederick Eckhart; she had died quite suddenly. Went with Rev. Hunsperger to Tilman Moyer for supper. Spent the night at Amos Meyer's.

June 6. [Sunday]. Went to meeting at Moyer's. Took dinner at Jacob Kratz' and supper at Joseph B. Moyer's. Night at Joseph A. Moyer's.

June 7. Left for the Falls. Passed the Jordan meeting[house] where Dave High preaches. He has five or six families only; for the young folks do not attend this church's services. "Saw the rock Dr. Clark stood on and a wave washed him off. . . . We had a fair sight of the falls. . . . The suspension bridge is a splendid sight. . . . The museum is a curious sight; the carcass of the whale is astonishing to me."

Went back to Preacher A. Moyer's for the night, in company with John Rittenhouse & wife. J. H. Moyer's wife came to the Jordan depot for us.

June 8. Christian, son of A. Moyer, took us for a call on William and Mary High, formerly Mary Rosenberger. Then we called on Philip, son of old Isaac Wismer, "where the old mother is." Saw Jacob Nash who is ill with kidney disease. Also visited Jacob Moyer, called "States Moyer," who has a sawmill on the Twenty. Then saw David D. Moyer, who is "weakly"; then, "old Joseph Fretz," aged 74, who is feeble. Visited for an hour with Samuel B. Moyer. Christ Moyer and Isaac Kulp took us about with teams. Stayed at Jacob B. Moyer's for the night.

June 9. Visited "William Moyer Tobacconist," who has "some hands at work in an extensive building." Also called on Samuel M. Moyer, and took dinner with Abraham M. Moyer. "Then to meeting on the hill. A nice little flock was as-

sembled." Took supper at Nicholas Seabender's. Spent the night at John Moyer's.

June 10. John and Sam S. Moyer took us to Tilman Houser, whose wife had a stroke of palsy eight years ago [and is still palsied]. After a short visit at Houser's, took dinner with Jacob L. Moyer. "Here we read a letter written by A. S. Moyer in January; was delayed till this date." Visited Abraham Wismer, son of old Isaac Wismer; when Abraham came here "there was not room to drive in without cutting timber for a road. The wolves came howling around the log house. His wife said she often felt afraid. . . . Canada is a thriving place." Ate supper at Wismer's. [Night at] Samuel S. Moyer's.

June 11. On the way to Abraham T. Moyer's we passed through woodland that formerly belonged to Rev. Jacob Gross. "My thoughts wandered to and fro." We also saw "what they call an ice spring. It is a hole between the rocks; there is ice and snow in it now. In winter it is warm, they say." From this mountain one has a beautiful view of Lake Ontario, Toronto, and the valley of the lake.

June 12. Abraham Kratz took us through rough country; passed through Smithville, Camptown, and Conger and went down the Grand River to the Conger settlement. "Canada is a large province; I thought of the North Pole on this trip." Took dinner and supper with Widow Hunsperger and her children; they were at the meeting.

June 13. [Sunday]. This forenoon went to the meeting near Henry Hunsperger's. Took dinner at his home, where there was a goodly number. Went on with A. Kratz for supper at David High's; night at Jacob Kulp's.

June 14. Went with David High to the Rainham meeting near Lake Erie. Dinner at the home of David Kindch [? Kindig, perhaps]. "Lake Erie is a splendid sight." This neighborhood, called "Indian Woods," is a new settlement, but is already well cleared. Visited John Hunsperger in the afternoon and took supper with his son. H. Hunsperger, A. Kratz, and J. Hunsperger accompanied us to Rev. Abraham High's, where we spent the night.

June 15. Attended a meeting at Cayuga [?]. Took dinner at the home of Henry Rittenhouse, as did A. Kratz, A. High, and H. Hunsperger and their wives; also Widow Hunsperger. Supper at Jacob Stover's [?]; they bought their land here thirty odd years ago for three to five dollars per acre. . . . "They have built a good meetinghouse (frame), also sheds: a nice congregation. Now if they serve this God that brought them into this land, He will be their Protector. . . ." Spent the night at Christian Gehman's.

5. TO NEW YORK AND HOME

June 16. Left at six o'clock and reached Buffalo by noon. Crossed the Niagara river. "This is a great sight, and also frightful. When we came over a sneak looked in our traveling sack." At 4:10 we went on to Alden station, then went

by foot to the home of Kratz. He took us to J. Derstine, where we spent the night.

June 17. Derstine is situated near Marilla. "This is a beautiful neighborhood and a great fruit country." He took us to his other lot and left us at the Alden station at 4:30. At 5:00 we left on the Buffalo, New York, and Erie [railroad] for Philadelphia.

June 18. Arrived at Corning at 12:30 a.m. Left for Harrisburg at 4:30. Had to stay at Elmira from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. "Desperately disappointed" by the delay.

June 19. Arrived at Philadelphia at 9:45 a.m. Left at 2:00 p.m. for Sellersville where we arrived an hour later. Left by foot for A. Hunsicker's; the women went by carriage, Mr. Cooker taking them. A. Hunsicker's boy took us home. "Well, safe and sound! Thanks be to God, for His mercy endureth forever."

WEAVER'S CHURCH

(Concluded from page 2, col. 2)

D. H. Landis. The sermon was delivered by Bishop Samuel Coffman from the passage in Acts 7th chapter and 48th verse: "Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands," etc.; his remarks were of wide scope, and were well delivered. The closing prayer was offered by Pre. Gabriel D. Heatwole, and the last hymn sung was "Religion is the chief concern of mortals here below," etc. The benediction was pronounced by Bishop Coffman.

In the above manner the second Weaver's Church was dedicated to God and opened for public worship. It was constructed of wood. The main auditorium was fifty feet wide and seventy feet long. The pulpit was placed in the west end. At the same end were two ante-rooms, one on each side. A schoolhouse was erected on the meetinghouse grounds. It was located west and north of the church building.

The second Weaver's Church served the people as a place of public worship from 1881 until 1941, a full sixty years, when the building of the third house was begun. The building committee for the new church consisted of the following: Dan J. Blosser, Chairman; Jos. A. Brunk, Secretary; J. B. Heatwole, Treasurer; David Swope, E. R. Brunk, John Kurtz, Hiram Weaver, Ralph Heatwole, and Joseph Heatwole. This committee includes the names of the present Weaver's Church trustees as follows: J. B. Heatwole, Chairman; Jos. A. Brunk, Secretary-treasurer; and David Swope. Several meetings of the congregation were called by Bishop S. H. Rhodes in order to decide upon the building of the church. When it was finally decided to build a church the question of material for the building was considered. After much discussion at one of the first meetings it was decided to build the church of stone rather than brick. Because some were dissatisfied another meeting was called to go over the matter of material again. When the final vote was taken, it was decided that stone should be used in the walls of the structure.

A Critique of Helen R. Martin's Tillie, A Mennonite Maid

ARTHUR WEAVER

I spent three hours reading this book, and was disappointed. The book is written in a simple style and depicts a family not at all typical of our Mennonite grandparents. It is too bad that our critics must pick the worst of us and set them up as typical.

The story itself concerns Tillie's struggle to get an education and live her own life against the wishes of her father, "a cruel hardheaded Dutchman." Mr. Getz was as tyrannical as any medieval despot. He forced Tillie to come home from school each evening and work long hours in the celery beds. At the age of twelve she was forced to quit school and "make herself useful." Discipline was the rule of the day. She never knew the tenderness of a caress until she climbed into the lap of her teacher, Miss Margaret. From that moment on, Miss Margaret became her guiding star.

Tillie read novels, loaned to her by Miss Margaret, late at night to prevent her father from knowing it. One time he discovered her reading *Ivanhoe* and burned the book and whipped her. She lied concerning the source of the book to shield Miss Margaret, for Getz was influential on the school board. Margaret did help Tillie by writing to her and giving her the necessary books to complete her education.

Tillie's family were Evangelicals but she was converted by a "New [Reformed] Mennonite" preacher and "felt to be plain." This she did in defiance of her father's will. However, her aunt was a "New Mennonite" and helped Tillie in her new life. She worked for this aunt in the hotel for some time. It was here that she met the new teacher, a man from Harvard, Walter Fairchilds, with whom she fell in love and whom she later married.

Absalom Puntz, only son of another influential school board member, was determined to marry Tillie. She endured "Sunday nites settin' up" with him to prevent Absalom's father from removing Fairchilds from the school.

Through the help of the doctor, Fairchilds was retained another year in spite of the fact that Getz and Puntz wanted him removed. A few weeks later he resigned anyway and Tillie, having passed the necessary examinations, was elected to succeed him. Her father was ready to object until he realized what forty dollars a month would do to improve the family income. Tillie, however, had other ideas; she refused to pay him more than for board and room.

Getz then started a movement to remove his daughter from the school. At the last minute, Fairchilds arrived in town with a letter from Miss Margaret asking Tillie to go to Europe with her for

the summer. At the same time she found her love for Fairchilds to be mutual and later they married. Tillie was freed from her narrow background at last.

The author tells us that the Getz family is typical of the better sort to be found in southeastern Pennsylvania. Getz himself is spoken of as being "wonderful near" and considered to "be overly strict" and "too ready with the strap still," by his neighbors, but nevertheless highly respected as a hard-working, successful man.

It is probably true that some of the Mennonites were something like those pictured in *Tillie*, but it is not fair to give out the impression that they all were that way. Furthermore, Tillie's victory came not through the church but by leaving the church and being excommunicated, unrealistic though it is.

I am not sorry that I read the book but I am disappointed in the impression it may leave with the outside reader.

PRESENT SCHOOL SYSTEM

(Concluded from page 1, col. 2)

metic (in German, with calculations in terms of English currency and the metric system), and an English-German Testament were the chief textbooks at first. Grammar, geography and mental arithmetic were introduced only after much opposition. The teacher boarded among the parents of the pupils, going from house to house, conducting school four months during the winter for a gross expenditure of three cents per pupil per day.

With George Wolf's election in 1830 to the governorship of Pennsylvania, he immediately advocated a free school system, but it did not become a Pennsylvania statute until 1834, and then it would have been repealed had it not been for the eloquent and fervent advocacy of it in the 1835 Legislature by Thaddeus Stevens, later a prominent attorney in Lancaster. But he with Thomas Burrowes, Lancaster educator, laid the foundations deep for our present system, basing it upon the system established by the Mennonites.

From the start the free school system was opposed by Friends, Lutherans, Reformed, and Mennonites alike. State Superintendent James Wickersham justifying them in their own right later said: "They were not opposed to education. They had proven their interest in it by establishing hundreds of schools in connection with their churches. In these in accordance with the rules of their churches and the customs of their fathers, their children had long been instructed by teachers of their own appointment in the several branches of secular knowledge and in the sacred doctrines of religion. They had built schoolhouses and provided school accommodations with their own money. To break up this system of schools which they had established and which they were willing to continue to support, and be compelled to pay taxes for the support of

common schools, in which they had little interest, seemed to them alternatives equally objectionable.

"Every friend of common schools must respect the motives that led members of the religious bodies so circumstanced to oppose the free school law and against them no valid argument can be made except the demands of a broad public policy before which individual rights must give way to that of 'the greatest good to the greatest number.'"³

Because the three schools mentioned above were so highly successful it was not until 1847 that Manheim Township turned these schools over to a State school board, and the Mennonites of the township built their first central meetinghouse at Landis Valley that year.

From the first public school by Conrad Beissel at the Ephrata Cloisters in 1721 through the parochial private and public schools of the next 125 years and the development of the public school system in the last one hundred years is a long, interesting, and unwritten history. In the eighteenth century the Moravians were in Lititz, the Reformed southeast of Strasburg, the Presbyterians at Chestnut Level and Donegal, the Friends at Bird-in-Hand, and the Episcopalians in Canaervon. By 1800 the Mennonites and Lutherans together conducted a school at Durlach and by 1813 at Wood Corner. Other Mennonite communities undoubtedly had a few, although the information is meager. Where no private schools were conducted the townships accepted the 1834 law almost immediately, beginning with Little Britain, Martic, Bart, Colerain, the Donegals, and Rapho. Elizabeth, Upper Leacock, West Earl, and Manheim in 1847 were among the last.

The next step was to place them adjacent to the meetinghouse. This is still to be observed at Risser's, Stumptown, Hammer Creek, Chestnut Hill, Weaverland, Bossler, and Metzler. With consolidation, they were far removed. What might the Mennonite Church be today, if they had not only nobly started, but as admirably continued in the footsteps of Christopher Dock!

¹ Copied from original in possession of owner.

² The U. B. Church started only three miles away.

³ Pennsylvania Historical Society (1892), p. 48.

How to Get on the Mailing List for the Historical Bulletin

New readers for the MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN are always welcome. If your name is not already on the mailing list for receiving the Bulletin regularly, consider this to be an invitation to send in your name and address with remittance to the treasurer of the *Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference*, Edward Yoder, Scottsdale, Pa.

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No. 3

History of the Forks Congregation

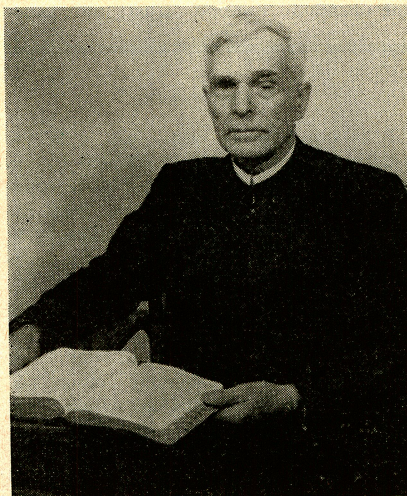
Alberta Augsburger

The first Amish Mennonites moved into the state of Indiana in the year 1842. They came from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, and settled about a mile from the present Clinton Frame Church in Elkhart county. There were four Amish families who came at this time, and as far as we know, they were the first Amish to settle in the state of Indiana. They were two Bontrager families and the Joseph and Daniel Miller families. Joseph and Daniel Miller are both great uncles to D. D. Miller, the present bishop of the Forks congregation. These early Mennonite pioneers held services in the homes of the members in the years 1842-1850.

The Clinton settlement grew and soon spread over into LaGrange county. After some years the Amish Mennonites in LaGrange county decided to become a separate group and hold their own meetings. It was too far for some of the people in LaGrange county to drive to church, so the congregation was finally divided in 1857. The group that separated from the Clinton Church, with others who had settled near Forks, was the beginning of the present Forks congregation. This group at first held meetings in their homes just like they had done at the Clinton Church, and as The Old Order Amish still do. The first meeting of this group was held at the home of Joseph Hersberger who lived one mile north and three-fourths mile east of the present Forks Church. In 1864 these people built their first church building, a step which marked their break with The "Old Order" of the Amish. It was built on the site of the present building which is six miles southeast of Middlebury in the fork of the Emma and Little Elkhart rivers.

The first preachers of the Forks congregation were Christian Miller and Christian Plank, both of whom had come here as settlers from Pennsylvania. In 1867, however, Joseph Bontrager was ordained preacher—the first preacher ordained in the Forks Church. He remained with the Forks congregation only for a half dozen years.

The Forks congregation gradually became larger, and often the meetinghouse was filled to capacity. One Sunday, after having delivered his sermon, D. J. Johns, who was then bishop of the Forks, spoke to the congregation about having a larger house of worship. He said that it was



D. D. Miller, 1864
Bishop of the Forks Congregation

not because the building was not good enough, but different people had told him that they, too, would like to attend the Forks Church, if there were room. In 1893 the congregation built a new house which was forty by seventy feet in dimensions. The old building was moved to a near-by farm which is now owned by D. D. Miller, and is being used as an implement and auto shed at the present time. In 1915 the meeting house was remodeled inside, with a basement added and a furnace and a light plant installed. In 1926 the church was reroofed and newly painted, and a new furnace was installed. Early Sunday morning September 18, 1927, the Forks Church was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. Some of the members did not know about it until they arrived to attend the day's meeting. The present building was then erected. It was built on the very same foundation, and it resembles the old one in appearance. The cost of the new building was estimated at about \$13,000; but its final cost was somewhat more. The first service in this house was held on January 15, 1928. The building lacked benches at first; chairs were used until benches could be purchased. The present building is a plain, white frame structure. There are no separate class rooms, except in the basement, in which Sunday-school classes can meet separately. Few repairs have been made on the present building; however, it has been repainted a few times.

Let us now turn to the ministers and deacons who have served at Forks from
(Turn to page 4, col. 2)

John Calvin and the Swiss Brethren

JOHN C. WENGER

Since John Calvin (1509-1564) was the most thorough Bible student of the leading reformers of the sixteenth century, it is not surprising that he felt called upon to reply to the Swiss Brethren, who were the spiritual fathers of the present-day Mennonites. For it was the Swiss Brethren who made the most complete break with the Roman Catholic faith and practice, and it was because of their intense desire to be true to the Word of God that they broke away from Catholicism.

In his article on Calvin in the *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Christian Neff gives a brief biographical sketch of the reformer and also discusses carefully Calvin's contacts with Swiss Anabaptism. Those who read German ought to consult Neff's article. Interesting also is Christian Hege's article on Idelette von Bueren, the wife of Calvin, and the widow of a former Anabaptist named John Stordeur. Calvin married Stordeur's widow in August, 1540. He lived with her less than nine years, for she died on March 9, 1549. On her deathbed Calvin promised Idelette to care for her children by her first marriage as if they were his. She replied that she had already committed them to the Lord.

Calvin wrote several books against the doctrines of the Swiss Brethren. The first, *Psychopannychia*, written in 1534, the year of his conversion, was an attack on the notion of soul-keeping, a theory which is not believed to have been held by the Swiss Brethren. The book did not appear in print until 1542. In 1544 Calvin's second work against the Anabaptists appeared, *Brieve Instruction . . .*, and consisted mainly of a refutation of the Seven Articles of Schleithem, the confession of faith adopted at a conference of the Swiss Brethren in 1527. Calvin also mentions the Anabaptists in a book of 1545, *Contre la secte . . . des Libertins*. He also speaks of encounters with Anabaptists in a number of his letters which have been preserved.

The greatest work of John Calvin was his theological treatise, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the first edition of which appeared in 1536. Since this huge work is a rather complete exposition of Reformed doctrine, it is evident that Calvin had to face the viewpoint of the Swiss

Brethren at numerous places throughout his treatise. It will be of some interest therefore to note briefly Calvin's allusions to Swiss Brethren doctrine. All references to the *Institutes* will be made by Book, Chapter, and Section; thus II, viii, 26 means Book II, Chapter viii, and Section 26. All quotations will be made from the Sixth American Edition, The Westminster Press, 1935, being the translation of John Allen.

1. The Oath

Calvin defends the right of Christians to swear an oath. He bases his view on the teaching found in the Old Testament. In this connection he observes, "The Anabaptists, not satisfied with this limitation of oaths, condemn all oaths without exception; because the prohibition of Christ is general . . ." (II, viii, 26). Calvin then proceeds to refute the literal acceptance of Christ's teaching, but admits that "the words of Christ involve some difficulty." After attempting to refute the Anabaptist view of oaths Calvin concludes, "It can no longer be doubtful, therefore, to persons of sound judgment, that the Lord, in that passage, only condemns those oaths which had been forbidden by the law" (II, viii, 27).

2. Relation to the Old Testament

On a number of points the reformers defended their rejection of Anabaptist principles by an appeal to the Old Testament. The matter of oaths, as mentioned above, is a case in point. Consequently when Calvin wrote his chapter on "The Similarity of the Old and New Testaments" he felt called upon to straighten out "some madmen of the sect of the Anabaptists, who entertained no other ideas of the Israelitish nation, than of a herd of swine, whom they pretend to have been pampered by the Lord in this world, without the least hope of a future immortality in heaven" (II, x, 1). What Calvin means is that he felt the Swiss Brethren overemphasized the contrast of the two covenants and their respective blessings. His abusive language should not be taken too seriously for that was the style of religious arguments four hundred years ago.

As a matter of fact Calvin engaged an Anabaptist on this very point in the year 1546. The Anabaptist, a man named Belot, was arrested in Geneva, Switzerland, in January, 1546. Belot and Calvin were not able to agree on the swearing of oaths. Calvin asked him if the Law of the Lord did not give us guidance for our life, "Thereupon," says Calvin, "he advanced the horrible dogma of the Anabaptists (Taeufer): 'The Old Testament has been abrogated.'" (*Menn. Lexikon* I, 316).

If any reader wishes more information on the Mennonite position as to the relation of the Christian to the Old Testament, he should consult John Horsch: "been abrogated.'" (*Menn. Lexikon* I, 316).

QUESTION BOX

When and how did the Mennonite Book and Tract Society originate?

For some years prior to 1908 there existed the Mennonite Book and Tract Society whose purpose it was to publish and distribute religious tracts and other

3. Repentance

It is not entirely clear just what the Anabaptist practice was to which Calvin referred when he condemned their stand on repentance. We do know that the Swiss Brethren wished to admit into their fellowship only those who were truly born again. In any case Calvin's comment is as follows: "But there is not the least appearance of reason in the notion of those who, in order to begin with repentance, prescribe to their young converts certain days, during which they must exercise themselves in repentance, after the expiration of which they admit them to the communion of the evangelical grace. I speak of many of the Anabaptists, especially of those who wonderfully delight in being accounted spiritual, and their companions, the Jesuits, and other such worthless men" (III, iii, 2). Calvin felt that the Anabaptist practice tended to confine repentance to "a few short days" when it really should "extend throughout the [Christian's] whole life." With this view of the necessity of the Christian ever having a penitent spirit, the Swiss Brethren were in agreement. But it is true that they did believe in the possibility and necessity of a holy life. And of that fact Calvin was keenly aware as we shall presently see.

4. Holiness

Calvin's remarks on the subject of holiness as held by the Swiss Brethren were not in complete agreement with each other. Sometimes he accuses them of a sort of fanatical holiness, at other times of libertinism. Of the latter type are these words, "Some Anabaptists, in the present age, imagine . . . that the children of God, being restored to a state of innocence, are no longer obliged to be solicitous to restrain the licentiousness of the flesh, but that they ought to follow the leadings of the Spirit, under whose direction it is impossible ever to err" (III, iii, 14). A little farther on Calvin speaks of the work of God's Spirit in leading us to obey the divine righteousness, "which obedience," says Calvin, "cannot exist without the subjugation of the appetites, to which these men would allow on unlimited license" (III, iii, 14).

In another part of the *Institutes* Calvin remarks that "there have always been

religious literature. From the printed information it is not clear just when and how the Society originated. In the *Mennonite Cyclopedic Dictionary* (p. 229) one finds the statement that "this organization was formed in May, 1889, by a number of brethren who had come together to attend a conference near Orrville, Ohio. Following were the officers elected: president, J. S. Coffman; vice president, David Burkholder; secretary, M. S. Steiner; treasurer, G. L. Bender."

In September, 1899, the Mennonite Book and Tract Society published the first issue of a four-page paper entitled: *Book and Tract Messenger*. This was published at Spring Grove, Pa., but no further numbers appeared. In this paper there is given information pertaining to the origin and history of the sponsoring Society. After mentioning some earlier sentiment in favor of organized tract distribution the history continues: "No organized effort, however, was put forth till A.D. 1892. In the spring of this year at the regular meeting of the Ohio Conference an act was passed favoring an organization to publish and distribute tracts and to furnish Bibles and Bible Helps at low rates to ministers of the gospel and free of charge to the worthy poor. An organization was accordingly affected [sic], under the name of MENNONITE BOOK AND TRACT SOCIETY."

The resolutions passed by the Ohio Conference in 1892 pertaining to this work read as follows: "Resolved, that this conference encourage the establishment of a Mennonite Book and Tract Fund, and will aid in the contribution and distribution of the same. Resolved, that the following brethren and as many more as may be needed and chosen by the appointed committee be considered members (?) of the Mennonite Book and Tract Fund: David Burkholder, Nappanee, Ind.; R. J. Heatwole, Newton, Kansas; C. Z. Yoder, Weilersville, Ohio; J. K. Hartzler, McVeytown, Pa.; G. L. Bender, Elkhart, Ind.; John Blosser, New Stark, Ohio; M. S. Steiner, Elkhart, Ind."

The officers of the Society, as it was revived in 1899 and reported in the *Book and Tract Messenger* mentioned above, were: president, John Blosser; vice president, David Burkholder; secretary-treasurer, John W. Weaver; assistant secretary-treasurer, G. L. Bender; tract editor, John S. Coffman.

The funds of the Society were mainly derived from freewill offerings, though a membership fee of one dollar was collected from persons who enrolled as active members and supporters of the Society. In 1908 the Mennonite Book and Tract Society was absorbed by the then newly formed Mennonite Publication Board.

There are doubtless some persons still living who could from personal recollection help to harmonize the above conflicting accounts as to the time of origin of the Mennonite Book and Tract Society. The BULLETIN will be glad to publish further information on this point.

An Appreciation of J. W. Yoder's Rosanna of the Amish

ERNEST C. SHANK

This is a true life story from one of the strangest religious groups in the United States. Though it is the life story of a person, yet there is in it the story of the life of a people, a people to whom pride is the cardinal sin, whose entire social system is built up on a principle of simplicity and brotherly love. It is the story of a people who will neither vote nor hold public office, who have no use for modern electrical and water fixtures or other modern conveniences.

It is the story of a girl born of Irish ancestors, who was brought up in the manner of the Amish in a typical Amish home upon the death of her mother and later her father. Rosanna, for that was the child's name, was put under the care of Elizabeth Yoder. Not long afterwards Elizabeth was married to Crista Kauffman, and it was under the care of this fine couple that Rosanna grew up.

It is the way of the Amish that the children shall be brought up to know how to work, for among the Amish everyone works and everyone works hard, for that is considered the only honorable way of life. So as Rosanna was getting old enough to learn to work a little, Mommy, as Rosanna called Elizabeth, began to assign responsibilities to her. In the garden she was taught which plants were weeds and which were flowers and vegetables. When planting tomato plants, Mommy would plant one, then let Rosanna try to plant one and then both would remember which was Rosanna's. When Mommy baked bread she would give Rosanna a little dough to knead and put in a little pan to bake just like Mommy's. Elizabeth in the manner of the Amish taught Rosanna much by means of example. This included teaching against the feelings of pride and in the ways of simplicity. Everything they did was considered with respect to the possibility of their being regarded as proud by their neighbors.

The homes of the Amish were built and furnished around the central theme of simplicity, no embellishment or decoration, though everything was kept neat and clean. Whatever their farms lack in beauty because of the absence of artificial embellishment is more than made up for in the way the house is kept spotlessly clean, the garden and surroundings neat and trim, beautiful flowers in the garden and in the house; clean barns, fields, and pastures; beautiful horses and cattle.

I enjoyed the contents of the book immensely with its accurately detailed descriptions of Amish life and customs. All the important occasions in the life of these folks were interestingly noted and described. There was the time of Rosanna's joining the church, with her deep emotional experience when Bishop Shem,

her stepfather, baptized her and Mommy performed the duty of the Bishop's wife with tear-filled eyes. Then came the times when Rosanna could take part in the corn-huskings, barn parties, and Sunday evening singings. The courtship of Rosanna and Little Crist was also an interesting story. The intense secrecy which Little Crist wanted to keep around his courtship, the results of being published (which was merely an announcement of the intended marriage at the close of preaching services) on the relations between Rosanna and Little Crist, were all very interesting. Where before Little Crist had done all his courting at night and in deepest secrecy, he now went to visit Rosanna in broad daylight. The details of the wedding and the wedding dinner and following merriment all helped to put across the story.

All in all I appreciated reading this book greatly, more in fact than I have any other book for a long time. It was interesting to me to compare the customs of the Amish with those of our own church group and to see the remarkable similarity between the two. Though it is easily seen that our church is getting farther and farther away from some of these traditions and customs, yet in some cases the church as a whole, as well as her individual members would greatly benefit by a turning back to the more simple life. There was, I thought, a tendency of the author to lean a little too much in the favor of the Amish in his presentation, because in some localities the customs are not all so ideal nor conditions so wholesome as here presented. The practice of powwowing as pictured in this book presents, too, a rather biased viewpoint, it seems to me.

JOHN CALVIN

(continued from p. 2, col. 2)

persons, who, from a false notion of perfect sanctity . . . despised the society of all men in whom they could discover any remains of human infirmity . . . Such . . . are some of the Anabaptists, who would be thought to have made advances in piety beyond all others" (IV,i,12).

Again, in speaking of the schismatic Donatists in the ancient church, he says, "The same conduct is pursued in the present day by the Anabaptists, who, acknowledging no congregation to belong to Christ, unless it be in all respects conspicuous for angelic perfection, under the pretext of zeal destroy all edification" (IV,xii,12). In the same vein he also writes of "some of the Anabaptists" who "imagine that by baptism the people of God are regenerated to a pure and angelic life, which cannot be contaminated by any impurities of the flesh. And if anyone be guilty of sin after baptism, they leave him no prospect of escaping the inexorable judgment of God. In short, they encourage no hope of pardon in anyone who sins after having received the grace of God. . . . (IV,i,23).

(to be concluded)

NEWS & NOTES

The committee which sponsors the Mennonite Historical Association and publishes the BULLETIN is known as the Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference. It consists of ten brethren who are elected biennially by the General Conference. The Committee's work is to promote study and research in Mennonite history and to create a wider interest in the past history of the Mennonite Church among its members.

At the latest session of Mennonite General Conference, held at Goshen, Indiana, August 20-24, 1943, the Historical Committee gave a report of its activities for the past two years. We hope in the next number of the Bulletin to give our readers a brief summary of the report given to the General Conference, together with other items concerning the Committee's work in recent years. The persons elected as members on the Historical Committee for the next two years are these: H. S. Bender, Goshen, Indiana; H. A. Brunk, Harrisonburg, Va.; J. C. Clemens, Lansdale, Pa.; S. F. Coffman, Vineland, Ont.; Melvin Gingerich, North Newton, Kansas; Ira D. Landis, Lititz, Pa.; C. Z. Mast, Elverson, Pa.; J. B. Smith, Elida, Ohio; John C. Wenger, Goshen, Indiana; Edward Yoder, Scottsdale, Pa.

The historical articles published in the BULLETIN are attracting the interest of other publications. The *American-German Review*, April, 1943, printed part of Melvin Gingerich's article, "Amish Ministers' Meeting, 1874," which appeared in the BULLETIN of Dec. 1942. The *Mennonite Weekly Review* (Newton, Kansas), August 12, 1943, reproduced the article on "Hans Hess (?-1733)" by Ira D. Landis, from the June, 1942, BULLETIN.

A number of new members have come into the Historical Association recently. Those who have enrolled as members since the June issue of the BULLETIN was sent out are as follows: Fred S. Brenneman, Hesston, Kan.; Jacob E. Brubaker, 1310 Rose Ave., Lancaster, Pa.; Curtis C. Cressman, New Hamburg, Ont.; Edward Diener, Wellman, Iowa; Daniel M. Glick, Smoketown, Pa.; J. F. Garber, Rt. 4, Harrisonburg, Va.; Joe H. Garber, Rt. 4, Goshen, Indiana; Amos S. Horst, Akron, Pa.; C. W. Huber, Rt. 1, South Boston, Va.; Edward D. Jones, White Cloud, Mich.; Alma Kauffman, Rt. 1, Tiskilwa, Illinois; Clyde X. Kauffman, Brutus, Mich.; John A. Lehman, Boswell, Pa.; Henry E. Lutz, Mount Joy, Pa.; John H. Moseman, Akron, Pa.; J. Z. Rittenhouse, Hendricks Road, Lansdale, Pa.; I. Mark Ross, Hesston, Kans.; Stanley Shenk, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana; R. L. Showalter, 716 S. E. 2nd

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. By WALTER M. KOLLMORGEN: Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics. 1942, pp. 105. Illustrated. Paper cover.

During 1940, the U. S. Department of Agriculture made a study of six different communities to learn what factors made community life stable. At one extreme they chose a highly unstable community in the Kansas "dust bowl." At the other extreme was an Amish community in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania.

Walter M. Kollmorgen, the author of the Amish study, had a point of contact with the people of Lancaster county in his ability to speak High German, as had also his sister who helped him in this project. During their four months in the community, they "probably came as near to developing the status of participant observers as is possible without being members of the Amish church."

The result is a very satisfying piece of work. Although the author has deep sympathy with the point of view of the Amish, he has been objective in his treatment. One feels that he really understands the philosophy and the practices of the Amish. It is hoped that he will soon publish other materials which he gathered in his study of Lancaster county settlements.

The first part of the book defines and characterizes the community to be studied. Next the history of the settlement is presented. The writer then makes a study of their economic life. After this there is a discussion of their community organization and values, and finally there are conclusions relating to the forces that are making the community stable or are threatening its stability.

Mr. Kollmorgen learned that cultural patterns are longer preserved in the Old Order Amish community than among most other groups because it is a definite church policy to preserve the old order. Maintaining the old order, however, applies only to social and religious practices. They recognize that their community must have a sound economic foundation if it is to survive. They have, therefore, made many changes and improvements in their agricultural pattern so that they are generally recognized as being superior farmers.

They have learned, too, that their religious and social ideals can be preserved best in a rural environment. There are forces, however, which are threatening their rural way of life. The chief of these may be the increasing commercialization of their agriculture. The commercial farmer is more or less at the mercy of changing markets and other forces over which he has no control. This may

lead to serious financial difficulties and to a loss of security. When once the Amish farmers become financially dependent upon outside agencies, their secure, separated community life may disappear.

Leaders in our Mennonite communities should read this book. Those who feel that the church is compromising with the "social gospel" when it concerns itself with the economic problems of its people should learn from this study how closely related are all of the activities of man, be those activities social, educational, religious, or economic.—Melvin Gingerich.

FORKS CONGREGATION

(continued from p. 1, col. 2)

the beginning. As mentioned before, Christian Miller and Christian Plank, ministers who settled here and helped organize the church, served as the first ministers of the Forks congregation. The first minister to be ordained after the Forks had built a meetinghouse was Joseph J. Bontrager. Bontrager was ordained on June 2, 1867, and, as mentioned before, remained with the congregation only for about six years. He became dissatisfied. He felt that the people should dress more plainly. He also wanted all German preaching. These two facts led him to leave the Forks Church and start a new congregation, the Townline Church. When Bontrager left, he took with him a few families from the Forks; however, several families from the Old Order Amish united with him. Thus the Townline Church was established. It is a Conservative Amish Mennonite congregation. It is somewhat stricter in discipline than the Mennonites and yet more lax than the Amish.

Originally all the preaching was in German. An occasional English sermon was preached by a visiting minister at the Forks as early as 1880. After D. J. Johns began to serve as bishop at Forks, English preaching came more often. About 1900 the regular German preaching ceased altogether, except on special occasions such as funerals or when a German visiting preacher was called upon to preach. As mentioned before, this was one reason why Joseph J. Bontrager left the Forks; he wanted German preaching exclusively.

Jonas Troyer, originally from Ohio, was bishop at the Forks for several years. Then D. J. Johns, who had been ordained at Clinton, had the bishop oversight at the Forks until 1906.

The second ordination at the Forks was that of Joseph D. Miller, an older brother of D. D. Miller, which took place on June 19, 1886. He served until his death on January 4, 1901, a scant fifteen years of service.

Ed Gegax was ordained a minister on April 24, 1887, but he soon left the church and moved away.

Christian Plank, one of the original ministers, died January 2, 1887, and Christian Miller, the other pioneer minister died in 1891. D. J. Johns preached both of their funeral sermons.

In October, 1890, D. D. Miller was ordained deacon for the Forks congregation. One year later, in October, 1891, he was ordained as minister.

About the time D. D. Miller was ordained minister, Eli Miller, an Ohio minister, located in the community and made his home at the Forks. He did not preach very much the last fifteen years of his life because of old age. Eli Miller was not an ordinary minister; he held the Amish office of *voelliger Armendiener* (bishop-deacon). He died March 1, 1917; D. J. Johns and D. D. Miller preached the funeral sermon.

From 1891-1896 the Forks congregation was without a deacon since D. D. Miller had been ordained as minister in 1891. In 1896 Andrew J. Hostetler was ordained deacon. In 1903 Hostetler was transferred to the Middlebury congregation as minister, whereupon the Forks ordained Simon S. Yoder as deacon that same year, but he, too, was transferred to Middlebury.

(To be concluded)

NEWS & NOTES

(continued from p. 3, col. 3)

St., Perryton, Texas; David C. Steiner, 203 College Ave., Goshen, Indiana; LeRoy Stoltzfus, Bird-in-Hand, Pa.; Wilfred Ulrich, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana; C. J. Yoder, Wellman, Iowa; Joe H. Yoder, Rt. 2, Molalla, Ore.; Orrie D. Yoder, Bannock, Ohio; J. Kore Zook, Rt. 3, St. Johns, Mich. We sincerely welcome all these as members of the Association and as supporters of the work of the Historical Committee.

Cornelius Krahn, a Mennonite from Russia, who studied Mennonite history in Germany and Holland, and published a book on Menno Simons, is now a teacher in Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas. He writes a series of articles monthly on church history entitled "Faith of Our Fathers," which appear on the "Page for Mennonite Youth" in the *Mennonite Weekly Review*. The first articles dealt with the history of Christianity in general, while later articles are on the origin and history of the Mennonites. The articles are well written and instructive.

We are happy to print the first part of another interesting congregational history in this issue of the BULLETIN. It is written by a granddaughter of the present aged bishop (D. D. Miller) of the congregation, the Forks congregation near Middlebury, Indiana. The article will be concluded in the next number. The BULLETIN welcomes brief articles on the history of local congregations.

Many members of the Historical Association sent in their membership dues for 1943 in response to the notices which were sent out some time ago. We thank each one for the prompt response. Those who have neglected to send their dues are requested to do so at once.

MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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Vol. IV

DECEMBER, 1943

No. 4

Christoph Saur's Bible

The Bible held a large place in early American life and culture. As is well known, many of the pioneers who landed on American shores came here in search of a place where they might worship and serve God as they believed the Scriptures required of them. Invariably they brought copies of the Scriptures with them from their homeland. The German-speaking settlers who early came into Pennsylvania also brought with them printed Bibles. They reckoned these among their most treasured possessions. It was for their devotion to the truth of the Bible that they had endured persecution in the Old World and braved the long, perilous journey to a new land of promise in America. The Holy Scriptures were the light of life to them.

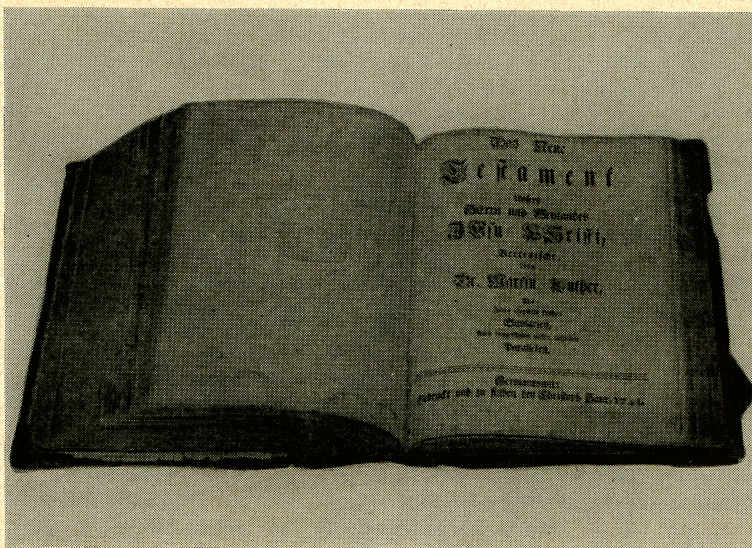
Numerous Mennonites and other persecuted religious refugees settled in Pennsylvania in the early part of the eighteenth century. Those who were of Swiss extraction brought with them in many cases copies of the *Froschauer Bible*, printed originally in Zurich, Switzerland, before 1530. A copy of one of these early Zurich Bibles is now deposited in the Historical Library at Goshen College, coming from the Frey family of Fulton county, Ohio. A copy of this same Bible brought to America by the first Yoder family, before 1715, is in the hands of a lady living in Reading, Pa.

An imported Bible which was a favorite among the Dunkers and other pietistic groups in early Pennsylvania, and was perhaps used some also by the Mennonites, was the *Berlenburg Bible*, printed 1726-1742, in eight volumes, a copy of which is in the Historical Library of the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, Pa. Out of this Bible, it is said, Christoph Saur took the text for several of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament; the rest of the text in the Bible he printed was taken from the thirty-fourth edition of Luther's Bible.

In the course of a generation after the first Mennonites settled in Pennsylvania there arose a demand for more Bibles than could be imported from abroad.

There was a thirst for the Word of God. The people did not wish the light that had led them to this land to be extinguished. Yet it was not easy to obtain stocks of Bibles and religious books from Germany and Switzerland for the needs of the pious, Bible-loving people of Pennsylvania.

Because of the need for religious reading matter among the German settlers, Christoph Saur of Germantown, himself an immigrant from Germany, became a pioneer printer and publisher in Pennsylvania. In 1738 he started issuing a German almanac which proved to be very popular. The next year he began publishing a religious newspaper in German, which en-



SAUR BIBLE, PRINTED 1743

Copy in Mennonite Historical Library, Scottsdale, Pa.

joyed a wide circulation. In 1742 Saur printed the first American edition of the earliest Mennonite hymnal, the *Ausbund* (see *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* of December, 1942).

As a printer and publisher Saur was in a true sense a pioneer. Materials and labor were scarce and expensive. His first press he had built himself. About 1740 he began preparations for the great task of printing the Bible, an undertaking he completed three years later. Therefore the year 1943 marks the bicentenary anniversary of the first edition of the famous Saur Bible. It was the first Bible printed in any European language on American soil. It was not, however, the first Bible to be printed in America. That honor belongs to the Bible printed for the Indians by John Elliott in 1663.

(turn to p. 4, col. 2)

History of the Forks Congregation

Alberta Augsburg

(Concluded from September issue)

S. E. Weaver was ordained minister on June 17, 1904. He filled his place until 1916 when he asked to be relieved of the office as minister. Weaver preached his last sermon on June 4, 1916, and on July 23, 1916, his wish to be relieved was granted. This was a very touching hour for the congregation.

There were two ordinations on Good Friday, April 13, 1906. At that time D.

D. Miller was ordained to the office of bishop, and Joseph Y. Hooley was ordained as deacon.

Ernest E. Miller was the next member to be chosen from the Forks congregation as a minister. On December 9, 1917, he was ordained as a missionary to India by Bishop J. S. Shoemaker, but because of war conditions he did not sail for that field until 1920. Between the time of his ordination and the time he set sail for India, he spent about sixteen months in relief work in the Near East.

W. Wilbur Miller was ordained a minister of the Forks congregation on June 12, 1921. He served the church several years then united

with another branch of Mennonites and moved away.

From 1921 until 1932 D. D. Miller and J. Y. Hooley were the only two officials in charge of the congregation. The work became quite heavy for both Miller and Hooley. Since D. D. Miller was bishop of a few other congregations,—Kouts, Middlebury, Goshen College, and Maple Grove (Topeka)—at the same time, he often had to be away from the Forks to hold the communion services, baptisms, council meetings, and other special meetings in those congregations. This left only Deacon Hooley to preach the sermon and conduct the church service. Since Bishop Miller was sometimes absent for weeks at a time, this laid a heavy burden upon the deacon. It meant much work for Bishop Miller because he generally conducted the Forks church services

when he was at home. On Sunday afternoon, May 8, 1932, the congregation assembled for council meeting. They talked of ordaining a minister to help carry the heavy load that was borne by Bishop Miller and Deacon Hooley. The congregation decided in favor of ordaining a minister. That afternoon the congregation cast their votes for a minister, and on the evening of the same day Early Bontrager was chosen minister by lot. He is still serving as minister in the Forks congregation (1943).

A year or two ago J. Y. Hooley asked to be partly relieved from his duty. He was quite an old man, and was becoming feeble. The church considered this and on March 29, 1942, Malvin Miller was ordained deacon on the strength of the congregational vote; no lot was used. Therefore, at the present time the Forks has two deacons.

No one is quite certain of the exact date when the Sunday school was started. D. D. Miller, who was born November 10, 1864, left Indiana for Missouri with his family about 1870 when he was five years old. He cannot remember of any Sunday school before he left, but when his family returned three years later, he remembers that the Forks congregation then had a Sunday school. The Sunday school at first was taught in German, and it was held only during the summer months. An evergreen Sunday school was established in 1886. (An evergreen Sunday school is one that is held every Sunday, all the year round.) The Forks Sunday school is one that has an average attendance of about 200. The Sunday-school service starts at 9:30 a. m. and extends until 10:30. From 9:00 to 9:30 every Sunday morning the teachers of the Sunday school gather together for a teachers' meeting. Here they discuss the Sunday-school lesson for the day. The purpose of this meeting is to give the teachers themselves spiritual food and to prepare them to teach their classes better.

The young peoples' meeting was started about 1890. The meeting now regularly consists of congregational singing, prayer, reading of the Scripture, reciting Bible verses, essays, and talks. The program usually lasts for an hour. In 1943 the congregation is studying some phase of Christian Growth. The first subject studied was "Personal Evangelism."

The entertainments which were held at the homes years ago were the first step toward organizing a literary society. This started about 1910. No programs were given, but games, contests, and general entertainments were enjoyed. Refreshments were usually served following the entertainment. There was no regular time for these meetings, and they were continued during the winter months. Ethel Yoder writes, "Following these meetings a literary society was organized, and regular meetings were held at the Forks schoolhouse. Programs were given, and very often they were called 'Debates.' These meetings did not survive very long

because so many of the young people from surrounding communities refused to take part. Many even refused to enter the house during the program, but would come in during the social hour. It was simply 'a place to go' for many of them and the work of the literary society was left to a very few to carry on. There was a period of some years after these meetings began before the real literary society had its beginning." (*Indiana Literaries*, p. 145) The literary society was, however, finally organized in the fall of 1917. The name chosen for this society was "Vesphi-Delphian." Vesphi means evening, which gave the literary society the permission to meet in the evening. Delphian means a speaking oracle; thus, when anyone becomes a member of the Vesphi-Delphian society he is required to speak or serve. The society chose the motto: "We learn to do by doing." "The following were promoters of the Vesphi-Delphian literary society: Gladys Miller Rutt, Amos Bontrager, Ernest Miller, Ernest Stahley, Ervin Yoder, Millie Nusbaum Mishler, Oliver Bontrager, Carrie Bell Yoder, Elmer Yoder, Chris Baker, Nettie Yoder, Mabel Stahley, Celestia Bontrager Schrock, Raymond Eash, Elsie Miller, Nelson Birky, Clarence Miller, and Samuel Weaver, who did all in his power to assist the young people in organizing their society" (*Ibid.*, p. 146). The Forks literary society "meets every three weeks unless there is a conflict, and then the meeting is changed to the most convenient time." At first the literary meetings were held on Friday evening, but the time of meeting was later changed to Thursday evening because "many members attended the Shipshewana high school, and the literary did not want to conflict with programs given at the high school." (*Ibid.*, p. 147) The literary society still meets every three weeks on Thursday evening unless there is a conflict. There are at the present time about forty members in the Vesphi-Delphian society.

The Forks congregation has always been interested in missionary work. In fact, two of the very first Mennonite missionaries to go to India were from the Forks. They were Dr. and Mrs. W. B. Page who with J. A. Ressler set forth to the first Mennonite foreign missionary field in 1899. Ernest Miller from Forks and his wife spent two terms of service in India. Jay Hostetler and wife are serving on the India mission field at the present time, and are both from the Forks congregation. At one time no single Mennonite congregation in the world had as many missionaries on the foreign field as did the Forks. The Amasa Kauffman family is also from the Forks; they went to southern Texas to do mission work among the Mexicans. It might be interesting to note just what first caused Mr. and Mrs. Kauffman to consider working among the Mexicans. One Mission Sunday in November, S. C. Yoder president of Goshen College, and secretary of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Chari-

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Franconia Mennonite Historical Society

A very interesting and inspiring historical meeting has gone into history. On Thanksgiving Day, 1943, the thirteenth annual meeting of this Society was held at the Line Lexington meetinghouse. The interest in church history is apparently growing.

The new president of the Society, Quintus Leatherman, paid a touching tribute to his predecessor, John D. Souder, who had been one of the founders of the Society and was president to the time of his death September 14, 1942; (see BULLETIN of March, 1943). Bro. Souder's absence was noticeably felt at the meeting; we are glad that a young man is ready and willing to take the place which he left vacant.

The history of the local congregation at Line Lexington was discussed by one of its members, namely Frank Leatherman. It was interesting to learn that John F. Funk and the Lapp's were originally connected with this congregation. By changing our place of meeting yearly we get a review of historical data of the several congregations.

M. C. Lehman was the principal speaker at this meeting; he gave us firsthand information on the Mennonites in Europe as well as the prospects for the relief witness. Graphic illustrations were given of how the Mennonite church in Europe lost out on its peace witness and finally on its religious freedom necessarily. It was alarming to hear that while one hundred percent of the young men take military training in Europe because there is no alternative, that there should be thirty-eight percent of our young men in America who take the same course when the government has provided alternate service. The impression was left that if the church will not awaken in America our liberty too will be taken away.

These historical meetings direct us back to the sufferings of our forefathers, showing how tenaciously they held to their faith even unto death. —J. C. CLEMENS.

Goshen College Mennonite Historical Society

During the past year the Mennonite Historical Society held three public meetings, presenting various phases of Mennonite life and culture. The Society bound about one hundred volumes of periodicals and other materials of a similar nature. In addition to printing the four issues of the MENNONITE QUARTERLY REVIEW, the board of directors has completed arrangements for the printing of THE LIFE OF CONRAD GREBEL. The book is now in press. The work of the Society is made possible through: membership dues, sustaining memberships, book sales,

and special contributions for binding. During the past year, subscriptions and sales of back numbers of THE MENNONITE QUARTERLY REVIEW totaled \$593.51. The officers of the Society are: H. S. Bender, president; Guy F. Hershberger, vice-president; John Umble, secretary; John C. Wenger, treasurer; and Sanford C. Yoder, fifth member of the executive committee.

—JOHN UMBLE.

FORKS CONGREGATION

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ties, gave an address in the afternoon. His topic was on starting mission work among the Mexicans. His address was very inspiring, and it was this message which first caused both Kauffman and his wife to consider becoming missionaries to the Mexicans. The Kauffmans at present are still laboring among the Mexican people and trying to bring them to Christ.

The Forks congregation has not only sent missionaries to the field, but has also conducted mission Sunday schools. The present Middlebury congregation is an outgrowth of the Forks, some of the Forks members having started it. Forks furnished the deacons and ministers for this new congregation and D. D. Miller served as the bishop. At first the ministers used to hold the meeting at the Forks in the morning, and in the afternoon they would hold meetings at Middlebury. For a short time the Forks also conducted a mission Sunday school at Wilson; they also had one near White Pigeon, Michigan, for a short while. Then for about two or three summers the Forks had a mission Sunday school at Fawn River, Michigan. Here, too, they held a worship service once a month.

Another missionary activity of the congregation is the sister's sewing circle. Until 1939 or 1940 the sewing was held in the homes of the sisters who belonged to the circle. In 1939 or 1940 the church purchased the adjoining property and remodeled the house for a sewing circle building. The women sew for the poor in the congregation, for orphans' homes, missions; and during the present World War they are also making kits for the young men of the congregation who are in Civilian Public Service camps.

Bishop D. D. Miller has for many years been connected with the General Mission Board at Elkhart, Indiana, serving as president, treasurer, and financial agent.

The people of the Forks congregation have had an active interest in missionary activities for many years. Those who are not able to go as workers on the mission fields give of their means to further the gospel. The Forks congregation has an active Sunday school, literary society, young people's meeting, and shows fine missionary interest. The congregation today consists of about 270 members. The people are genuinely interested in the growth and spiritual life of their church. It is the prayer and purpose of the members to go forth and witness to the world and lead souls into the kingdom of Christ.

John Calvin and the Swiss Brethren

John C. Wenger

(concluded from September issue)

5. Baptism

The Swiss Brethren would have been in full agreement with the opening sentence of Calvin's chapter on Baptism, which reads as follows: "Baptism is a sign of initiation, by which we are admitted into the society of the church, in order that, being incorporated into Christ, we may be numbered among the children of God" (IV, xv, 1). A little later in the same chapter he adds, "Thus we are promised, first, the gratuitous remission of sins, and imputation of righteousness; and, secondly, the grace of the Holy Spirit to reform us to newness of life" (IV, xv, 5).

Again he speaks as follows, "Baptism also serves for our confession before men. For it is a mark by which we openly profess our desire to be numbered among the people of God, by which we testify our agreement with all Christians in the worship of one God, and in one religion, and by which we make a public declaration of our faith. . . ." (IV, xv, 13). And after commenting on God's use of external means, Calvin goes so far as to say, "Nevertheless, from this sacrament, as from all others, we obtain nothing except what we receive by faith" (IV, xv, 15). To all these statements Conrad Grebel could have borne testimony.

In chapter 16 of Book IV Calvin attempts a refutation of the Anabaptists, although he knew very little about them. How does he justify the baptism of infants? His first argument is that baptism corresponds to circumcision, which sign was in the Old Testament performed on infants. He also holds that the command of Jesus, to permit the children to come to Him, justifies infant baptism. But when Calvin tries to answer the Anabaptists he runs into serious difficulty. He himself had stated that "infants are not excluded from the kingdom of heaven, who happen to die before they had the privilege of baptism" (IV, xv, 22). The reader is hardly prepared for his harsh statement regarding the opponents of infant baptism, "Finally, we ought to be alarmed by the vengeance which God threatens to inflict, if any one disdains to mark his son with the symbol of the covenant; for the contempt of that symbol involves the rejection and abjuration of the grace which it presents" (IV, xvi, 9).

Calvin becomes even more abusive when he says, "Moreover, they sentence all infants to eternal death, by denying them baptism, which, according to their own confession, is necessary to salvation" (IV, xvi, 26). Finally, he speaks of Satan making "great exertions in opposition to infant baptism" (IV, xvi, 32). The latter part of chapter 16 contains a

lengthy reply to Servetus whom he mistakenly labels as "one of the most eminent of the Anabaptists, and even the chief glory of that sect" (IV, xvi, 31). It is difficult for an unbiased reader to harmonize Calvin's general statements on baptism with his defense of infant baptism. Professor Karl Barth of Basel is aware of Calvin's inconsistency on this point.

6. The Lord's Supper

As was noted above in the discussion on holiness, Calvin accused the Swiss Brethren of at least approaching perfectionism. Calvin did believe in church discipline, to be sure, but he did not approve of the attitude and the practice of the Brethren. "Cyprian," he says, "has excellently remarked, 'Although tares, or impure vessels, are found in the church, yet this is not a reason why we should withdraw from it. It only behoves us to labor that we may be the wheat, and to use our utmost endeavors and exertions, that we may be vessels of gold or of silver. But to break in pieces the vessels of earth belongs to the Lord alone, to whom a rod of iron is also given. Nor let any one arrogate to himself what is exclusively the province of the Son of God, by pretending to fan the floor, clear away the chaff, and separate all the tares by the judgment of man. This is proud obstinacy, and sacrilegious presumption, originating in a corrupt frenzy'" (IV, i, 19).

In referring to Paul's command not to eat with offensive sinners, Calvin comments on the Anabaptist attitude in these words: "Here they exclaim, If it be not lawful to eat common bread with him, how can it be lawful to unite with him in eating the bread of the Lord? . . . I admit that it is the duty of a pious man to withdraw himself from all private intimacy with the wicked, and not to involve himself in any voluntary connection with them. But it is one thing to avoid familiar intercourse with the wicked; and another thing, from hatred of them, to renounce the communion of the church. And persons who deem it sacrilege to participate with them the bread of the Lord, are in this respect far more rigid than Paul" (IV, i, 15). Calvin adds that "we generally find that excessive severity is more owing to pride and haughtiness . . . than to true holiness . . ." (IV, i, 16). The Swiss Brethren, on the other hand, would have been in agreement with Calvin's assertion that the church as a whole decides on who ought to be admitted into and expelled from the church (cf. IV, i, 15).

7. Other Points

In discussing predestination, of which, by the way, Calvin says, "It is an awful decree, I confess" (IV, iii, 7), he lists the sects with which he is concerned as Pelagians, Manichaeans, Anabaptists, and Epicureans (III, xxiii, 8).

Calvin mentions in one place that in the ancient church "the faithful kissed each other" (IV, v, 15) before observing the

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Gospel Under the Southern Cross.
By J. W. SHANK, T. K. HERSHEY, D. PARKE LANTZ, NELSON LITWILLER, ELVIN SNYDER, L. S. WEBER, et. al. Scottdale, Pa., 1943. Pp. XVI, 272. Illustrated. Price, \$1.50.

Twenty-five years of service in mission work rehearsed in detail by the laborers themselves is not only an inspiration to them, but stirs any believer regardless of his field of labor. Paul stepped out with courage in future service by recalling God's providence in his behalf in the past (II Cor. 4:4-18).

The book is compiled in a way that it will be an asset to any church or Sunday-school library. The field rehearsed; the work undertaken; the problems and progress noted; the biographical sketches of the workers with the accompanying photographs, illustrations, maps, and pictures, all add to the value and interest of this book.

The geographical location of the field of work, being in the same latitude as the home base, only in the southern hemisphere with a reversed or opposite succession of seasons, is at once striking and interesting. Climatic conditions figured in when the field was finally chosen after deliberating from the time of J. W. Shank's investigating tour, 1911-1912, to the opening of the work in 1917. The description of this country is good reading for all, especially for the young.

The history of the native people is interesting and useful to evaluate the progress of our workers in this field; there is no better way to arouse the interest of the church in mission work than to present to it the needs of a people with whom we are sharing our labors. The successes and failures of the workers are graphically recounted; this also adds missionary knowledge to all interested.

The biographical sketches in the closing chapters of this volume are valuable data and a needed part of the history of the church. Church history needs encouragement, and there is no surer prediction of the future than the history of the past. This book clearly sets forth the happenings in the Lord's work in South America for the past twenty-five years and points ahead to what may be expected of the same Lord, if He pleases to tarry. A fitting introduction by S. C. Yoder, secretary of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, sets forth this work in South America in a glowing way. He himself visited that country and the mission field and is the author of another recent book, entitled *Down South America Way*.

The Gospel Under the Southern Cross is assured of a wide circulation.—J. C. Clemens.

CHRISTOPH SAUR'S BIBLE

(concluded from p. 1, col. 2)

There was no printing of English Bibles in America until much later.

Regarding the printing of Saur's first edition, Margaret T. Hills, in *Bible Society Record* (Oct., 1943), says this:

A new font of type was contributed by Dr. Heinrich Ehrenfried Luther, head of a famous type foundry at Frankfurt-am-Main. The press seems to have been secured from another printer, who lacked Saur's ability to get things done. The paper had been requested from a religious organization in England; but he may have used American paper. The ink he made himself from a formula of his own devising. The text followed was that of one of the Luther editions printed at Halle. Saur's first edition consisted of 1,200 copies. The fat, square volume is usually bound in stout, brown calfskin over oak boards, sometimes with a little simple tooling. The title page is strikingly printed in red and black, and charming cherubs appear at the end of the Old Testament and of the New. The volumes were sold at eighteen shillings, which is about \$2.50; but,—announced Christopher Saur,—“to the poor and needy we have no price.” In his preface Saur says the book contains no notes or explanations, because, “firstly, . . . by means of Scripture parallelisms, one phrase frequently illuminates another in the spiritual sense; secondly, because it is certain that to him who reads the Scriptures with an upright heart, the Holy Spirit in the heart reveals his true meaning by the reading itself; and according as every believer himself undergoes such an experience in himself, individually, so one believes assuredly that the time nears when the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isa. 11:9), and there shall be no need that brother teach brother and admonish him to know the Lord (Jer. 31:34).”

The first edition of this Bible met the demand for twenty years. Between the years 1745 and 1775 a series of German New Testaments was issued from the Saur press. The elderly Saur died in 1758, and his son Christoph, Jr., who was an elder of the Church of the Brethren, carried on the press. He brought out a second edition (2,000 copies) of German Bibles in 1763, and a third edition (3,000 copies) in 1776. Saur was opposed to war and on conscientious grounds declined to take the oath of allegiance to the state of Pennsylvania when the War for Independence broke out, as did many other nonresistant people of the province. Because of the stand he took Saur's goods were confiscated and sold at auction, including many unbound copies of his last edition of the Bible.

As already mentioned, many Mennonites used and preferred the Froschauer Bible when they came to America. With Saur's printing of Luther's text in his Bibles, the Mennonites too came to use Luther's version. Many Mennonite homes must have acquired and used copies of the Bibles printed and distributed by Saur. A footnote in John C. Wenger's *History of the Franconia Mennonites* (p. 323)

conveys the information that twelve Franconia Mennonite meetinghouses still have copies of the famous Saur Bibles in their pulpits; three of them have the 1743 edition, three have the 1763 edition, and six have the 1776 edition. One other Saur Bible (1763) from that district is now deposited in Goshen College Library.

Two copies of the Saur Bible have lately been presented to the Historical Library of the Mennonite Publishing House. A copy of the first edition (1743) came from Mrs. Mary A. Allen of Louisville, Ohio (see cut). The opening title page and parts of the first leaves of the Old Testament are unfortunately missing. This Bible once belonged to Mrs. Allen's father, William Burkholder. He had received it from his father, George Burkholder, whose father had brought it from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to Ohio about the year 1807.

The other Saur Bible recently received by the Mennonite Publishing House is a copy of the second edition (1763), and was presented by Mrs. James Stoner of Scottdale, Pa. —EDWARD YODER.

JOHN CALVIN AND THE SWISS BRETHREN

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Lord's Supper, but he does not refer to any such practice among the Swiss Brethren. Similarly, he refers to the teaching of James on anointing with oil, but in so doing he is refuting Roman Catholics, not Swiss Brethren (IV, xix, 19)). Calvin also refers to the woman's veil (I Corinthians 11:5) but not in connection with the Anabaptists. Rather he assumes that women shall be veiled whenever they appear in public (IV, x, 29 and 31).

It is evident that there were two major theological differences between Calvin and the Swiss Brethren. The first related to the church, its membership and function; the second concerned the Christian's ultimate source of authority, i.e., his relation to the two covenants, Old and New.

Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference

Treasurer's Report

For period, Dec. 23, 1941 to Dec. 31, 1943

Receipts: Amount brought forward, \$39.15; Membership dues paid for the Mennonite Historical Association, \$189.00; Bulletin copies sold, \$7.50; Donations from the Mennonite Publication Board, \$100.00; Other donations, \$8.00. Total receipts: \$343.65.

Disbursements: For publishing eight issues of MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN, \$164.65; For postage, express, etc., \$16.97; For Library building fund (Goshen College), \$9.40; For work done in Mennonite Archives, \$20.00. Total amount paid out, \$211.02.

Balance in the treasury (December 31, 1943), \$132.63.

Respectfully submitted, Edward Yoder, Treasurer.